

CLAIMS

*Subt B6*  
1. (Amended) A method for inhibiting the degradation of mammalian natriuretic peptides in specimen, which comprises using, upon handling the specimen, a container wherein the face coming into contact with the specimen is made of or coated with a material inhibiting the activation of a substance degrading the peptides.

2. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said material is silicone or plastic.

*Subt B7*  
3. The method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein said mammal is human, dog, pig, rat and mouse.

*Subt B8*  
4. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein said natriuretic peptide is BNP.

*Subt B9*  
5. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein said specimen does not contain aprotinin.

*Subt B9*  
6. A method for measuring mammalian natriuretic peptides, which comprises the method as claimed in claim 1.

7. (Amended) A kit for measuring mammalian natriuretic peptides, which comprises a container wherein the face coming into contact with specimen is made of or coated with a material inhibiting the activation of a substance degrading the peptides.

8. The kit as claimed in claim 7, wherein said specimen does not contain aprotinin.